INTERVIEW WITH FRANCISCO AND MARIA AVILA

February 25, 1976

Conducted by:

Dr. James L. Dodson

--and--

Miss Kathy Bermeister

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NOTE: Mr. Avila was the foreman of the Lankershim Ranch

Francisco: The Lankershim family history as though it was told by some of the Lankershim family:
Mr. Isaac Lankershim born in April the 8th 1818 in Chainfield, Navaria, came to the San Fernando in 1869. He bought the whole South end of the valley, extended from Caheunga Pass to Calabasas, almost 60 thousand acres of land from Andres Pico. He died in April the tenth, 1882 in Los Angeles. His wife
born June 15th, 1818 in Can County England, died June 6th, 1901, in Los Angeles.
They had two children, a daughter and a son, born Dec. 12, 1846, in Charleston, Missouri. Died May 1, 1923 in Los Angeles. Son, James Boone Lankershim, born March 24, 1950, in Charleston, Missouri. Died October 16, 1931, in New York city, brought to Los Angeles for Cremation. James Boone Lankershim married Miss Carolyn A. Jones in 1881 in Los Angeles, she died in 1928 in France. They had two children, a son and daughter, the son, J. I. Lankershim, born 1883 in Los Angeles, and died 1946 in Los Angeles. C. Lankershim, born 1885, in Los Angeles, died 1948 in Los Angeles. After 1882 when Mr. Issac Lankershim died, his son James Boone Lankershim took over all of the Lankershim's holdings including 12 thousand acres in the South land of the valley.
From 1882 to 1931, he was selling portions land in the valley.
In 1905, his son Jake I. Lankershim decided to be a farmer. He picked a parcel of land about a half a mile south of Ventura Blvd. and a quarter of a mile west of Lankershim Blvd. which became the region of Lankershim ranch.
He designed and built a 22 room house, a guest house, 7 garages, a barn to hold over fifty pounds of hay and feed, room for 32 milking cows and a bull, room to raise bulls, and he had 100s of acres of pasture. He landscaped about 2 acres of land around the house and had about 10 acres of land close to the landscaping planted with walnuts, trees, and many kinds of fruit trees. Once in a conversation with him, he told me he had spent close to $200,000 on the ranch from 1905 to 1925.
How I know the history of Lankershim family, I went to work and lived with them from June 18, 1929 to June 26, 1950.
The remaining portion of Lankershim ranch was sold in 1950.

Dodson: And then I think that you had some remarks about your own coming to the valley, Mr. Avila, would you read those for us.

Francisco: I'd be glad to. I moved to the San Fernando Valley with my parents from Arizona in 1920. I was 12 yrs old. We settled in the town of Lankershim, which is now called No. Hollywood. In those days the entire valley was huge

farming community with corn, grains, alfalfa, and different kinds of fruit trees. Citrus trees and olive trees and so on covered the ground. And a few dairies scattered through the valley. There were only about a half a dozen paved streets in the entire valley, the rest were dirt roads one half to one whole mile apart. Some of the people in the valley had no running water, electricy, or gas. At 12 yrs old,, I started working in farms at 20 and 25 cents an hour. Not until 1924, when I was 16 yrs old, I went to work for the Johnson Construction Company. We built a McKinley home for boys at Woodman and Riverside drive in Van Nuys. In 1926, I went work for Lakeside Country Club and help build the golf course in Toluca Lake. Next I went to work for the Lankershim family, poineers of the San Fernando Valley. The year was 1929, I was 21 yrs old. I stayed with the wonderful until 1950. And joined General Motors in 1952 in Van Nuys, from when I retired in 1972. Where was my education during my youth? I learned that a man is what he wants to be, this was my philosphy. I learned young and I have carried this thinking into my adult life.

Dodson: Thank you very much, Mr. Avila. Now we'd like to ask you a few questions about things that have occurred to us as you read your statement.
Miss Bermeister, do you have some questions that you'd like to ask Mr. Avila?

Kathy: Yes, I'd like to know how much did they pay in the beginning for the original parcel of land, the Lankershim's.

Francisco: I know that they paid $115,000 for almost 60 thousand acres.

Dodson: I'm curious of what your first impressions of the valley were when you saw it. You came from Arizona? How did you think that our valley differed at that time from what you'd been accustomed to in your home in Arizona?

Francisco: Well, there was quite a difference because where I came from from Arizona was a mining camp. There was just mines, very rough, just trails, hardly no roads, you know that you could drive with an automobile, in those days.

Dodson: I see, what kind of a population did the valley have at that time. Kathy has sometimes asked me whether there were any Germans living here, since she is partly of German descent. Were there, by any chance?

Francisco: Well, I really don't remember. But I know that there were Italians, and well that's about all that I could say. It was hard for my to tell the difference of nationalities. Except there were a few Mexicans. And a, that's all I could say.

Kathy: Were there any Indian tribes?

Francisco: No. No, not that I remember?

Dodson: I imagine that you came too late for anything like that. Can you tell us what your personal recollections of the valley would be. What would you regard as the most important thing that's happened in the valley in the history of the valley, since you've been here?

Francisco: Would I would say everything changed so much and so fast in these last few years, but I think it was really nice way back in the 1920's than it is now.

Dodson: Why would you say that, Mr. Avila?

Francisco: Well, because it was few people in the valley and everybody know everybody. Everybody was so friendly. Now, it seems to me that you are among strangers. You know very few people now adays. I would say that that time in Lankershim when I first came when there was about 1500 to 2000 people.

Dodson: That was the whole population of the valley, about 1500 to 2000 people?

Francisco: I'd say around Van Nuys and North Hollywood.

Dodson: You mentioned that fact that about half a dozen streets were paved, do you remember which were principle streets when you first came?

Francisco: There was Ventura Blvd, Lankershim Blvd, Magnolia, Chandler Blvd, and Van Nuys Blvd, and Sherman Way.

Dodson: I see. We have an old map of the Valley in 1910, of those street names that don't exist anymore. Do remember that Sepulveda was once called San Fernando Blvd. instead of Sepulveda?

Francisco: No, probably was before my time.

Dodson: I see. We also discovered that apparently Sherman Way ran along what is now Chandler, then ran up Van Nuys Blvd. and then turned on what is now Sherman Way. Do you remember that?

Francisco: I remember that. It was Sherman Way all the way up to I would say Vineland, now. It ran all the way to Van Nuys Blvd. and would start again at Van Nuys Blvd. toward Canoga Park, Reseda. And later on it became Chandler Blvd. from Van Nuys toward No. Hollywood.

Dodson: I see. Do you remember when we had communities in the Valley with such names as Owensmouth?

Francisco: Yes. I remember, yes, it was a...Owensmouth, now is Canoga Park. Woodland Hills, it was Gerard. And we had no Panorama City.

Maria: Excuse me. Northridge was Zelzah.

Kathy: That was the name of the city?

Maria: Zelzah, yes. They changed the name. At first it was Zelzah. Then they changed it to Los Angeles, very confusing, so they changed it to Northridge.

Kathy: They named actually Northridge, Los Angeles?

Maria: It used to Zelzah and then what is it called? North Los Angeles?

Francisco: North Los Angeles.

Maria: And then they called it Northridge.

Kathy: Do you know how they got that name, Northridge?

Maria: Yes, uh. I think it was Mr. um, the gentlemen that works for the uh Historical Society, I can't think of his name right now.

Dodson: Do you remember that some of the streets had numbers which they don't have like First street, Fourth street and all of that? Can you tell us how those happened to have their names changed?

Francisco: I really don't know. But I know they were numbers from

from one to twelve. I remember another one, if I can recall, it was uh Valley Spring, one, and Moorpark, number two, Amarillo, number three, Magnolia, number four, uh Burbank Blvd., number five. Oxnard, six, Victory Blvd., seven Vanowen, eight. Sherman Way, nine. Saticoy, ten. Strathern, eleven. And, Roscoe, twelve, And, San Fernando Rd.

Dodson: I see. Do you recall the annexation of the valley to Los Angeles? Why that took place?

Francisco: I remember, I have an idea, it was probably around 19

Maria: 27. Wasn't it?

Francisco: I think it was 1925. It's been so, you know that I haven't paid much attention and I uh.....

Discussion between Maria and Francisco on subject, but no answers developed.

Dodson: Do you remember why the valley was annexed to Los Angeles and what the feeling of the people was about that?

Francisco: Well, uh some of the people were against it.

Dodson: Do you recall why, just what the feeling was on their part?

Francisco: Well, they thought it probably would be more expense with taxes and probably the rights and what have you.

Dodson: I understood that the question of water had a great deal to do it. That Los Angeles was cutting off the water and they couldn't get water and they had no choice. Was that your feeling? What do you think now about the present movement to take the Valley out of Los Angeles and make an independent town out of it? Do you favor that?

Francisco: Oh I don't know. I don't know what to say.

Dodson: Change the subject a little. Do you remember any of the other poineers of the valley, like the Van Nuys family, did you know any of them?

Francisco: Yes, I knew Benton Van Nuys, Mrs. Mrs. Page, There were two sisters and one brother.

Dodson: Wasn't the original member of the family named Isaac Newton Van Nuys, the one who came here first?

Francisco: He was the one who came with Isaac Lankershim.

Dodson: I see, he died before you came, I suppose, you never know him.

Francisco: No, I never knew him.

Dodson: Can you tell us the relationship of the people you just mentioned to him? Were they children or grandchildren?

Francisco: They were Isaac Newton Van Nuys' children. Like I said before it was Benton Van Nuys, Mrs. , and Mrs. Page. Three of them.

Maria: And there were the Van Nuys children. There were Mr. Isaac uh.....

Francisco: And Isaac Van Nuys.

Maria: And Mrs. Susana Hill, Isaac Van Nuys, she was the mother to them, of three children.

Francisco: It was how they were related. because Isaac Newton Van Nuys married Susana Hill Lankershim.

Dodson: She was the daughter of Isaac Lankershim?

Francisco: Yea, the daughter of Isaac Lankershim.

Dodson: Are any of the direct members of the Van Nuys family alive at the present time to your knowledge?

Francisco: Not that I know of, I don't think so. I think they are all gone.

Dodson: I see, you pointed out that no direct descendents of Isaac Lankershim are alive either at the present.

Francisco: The last of the died in 1948, he was Doria C. Lankershim. He was the last of the Lankershim family to die.

Maria: But they had an adopted daughter.

Dodson: Doria was the one who had the adopted daughter? I see. Can you mention her name, you have met her, haven't you?

Francisco: Oh yes, we had her for a neighbor at the Lankershim Ranch for about 4 years. Then she got married.

Dodson: Was the last of the Lankershim Ranch sold after her death, when did it dissappear?

Francisco: Well, Miss Lankershim died in 1948, so they sold the remaining last portion of the ranch in 1950, two years after her death. That's when I lost my job with the family.

Dodson: I see. Do you have any idea how the Lankershim fortune has been invested and what's happened to it since then?

Francisco: No, I'm not sure. All I know that Miss Lankershim, the adopted daughter, she drew so much a year from the Lankershim portion.

Dodson: Do you have any questions, Kathy?

Kathy: I think you both are doing very well. Off hand I don't think of anything. I think you both are covering it very well.

Dodson: I was just wondering, if you can remember any of the type of celebrations or anything like that in the Valley? Did in the past celebrate the Fourth of July any differently than they do now? In some little there used band concerts and patriotic speeches and that sort of thing, was that true here in the valley to your recollection?

Maria: I don't think so.

Francisco: I don't think so.

Dodson: Would you say that maybe our large population of persons of Mexican descent has lead more interest in the holidays of Mexico here than would be true of some parts of the United States? Would that be a true statement?

Francisco: Probably so.

Maria: Usually they have the sixteenth of September and the Sixth of May. And they really like the Mariachi and they really enjoy themselves.

Dodson: Mrs. Avila, you've mentioned the 16th of September, would you tell us exactly what that refers to.

Maria: The Sixteenth of September is the day of Mexican Independence from the Spaniards and of course it's a big holiday. We also have another holiday that's the Fifth of May and this is the independence from the French people We were governed by two different people at different times and they celebrated independence, they have two during the year.

Dodson: That then was the independence from Maximillian and Carlotta.

Maria: Carlotta, that's the one from the Fifth of May. And the other one was from the Spainiards. The Spanish dominion that was September the sixteenth.

Dodson: I wonder if there are any traditions here that you know about dating from the Spanish period or the Mexican period, whether any of the people know anything about that or ever talk about it.

Maria: I know they celebrate the Posadas, they do, but we ourselves never did celebrate them, we don't know what it's all about. They do it in Nevada and different places but to us we don't know what kind of celebration that is. We celebrate Christmas.

Dodson: Well, that I can well believe.

Francisco: They celebrate the Posadas here in the Pico house.

Maria: Yes, I know they do, but too often we don't know, I never knew any of them myself.

Dodson: Well, I know whether there's anything else that we can think of that you haven't covered or not, do you think of anything that you'd like to add to what you've said?

Maria: The only thing that I can say is that I've been very happy here in the San Fernando Valley. To us this is really our home, because we've been here over fifty years. This really something. So, to us this is really our home all over the valley, not only here but everywhere. And of course now that we're working with the museum and we've tried to preserve things that belong, that are going to belong to the generations to come after we are gone. So, this is what we are working for.

Dodson: You mentioned having been here for fifty years, I'm reminded of the picture that we had of the valley in 1912, which seems to show little or nothing except a few barns here and there, Is that your recollection of what it would have looked like in 1912, very few houses and much open space?

Maria: We came to the Valley in 1922, and we used to have the Lankershim Elementary School and it was right there on Lankershim Blvd., just where J.C. Penny's used to be, we had our school there and then we moved it back to the Bakman that's when they needed the room to build J.C. Penny and everything was small, they had a small theatre.

Kathy: Was that out by Valley Plaza?

Maria: No, it was right there on Lankershim Blvd.

Kathy: Right.

Maria: Right there at the uh, just right next to the Portal Theatre. The old Lankershim part and of course, we walked to school because it was very close. We used to live right there on Vineland and Burbank Blvd. in that neighborhood. So we used to go to school, we used to walk and we could see the valley just grew and grew. After the war was when it started. Most of our lives we spended at the Lankershim ranch, it was a beautiful place to be. To us it was just like a dream living there, when you

Maria: (cont) come to thinking you have all those beautiful things around you. Heaven is as close as anything! My husband was planting the plants and having the workers for us and it was just like our home.

Dodson: Could tell us just where the ranch house was located in terms of our present streets?

Maria: Well, I can tell you the address, it was 106488 Ventura Blvd. And then we used to drive, which it was quite a long drive, about a quarter of a mile, or a half a mile to the house on Ventura Blvd. It was quite a ways. And it was really something unbelieveable. Only if you have then you'd really like what this place was. And across the street you could not see the house it was a little knoll that covered most of the house and you could still see some of the palm trees there. Thirteen palm trees on one side and thirteen on the other side, just as you come into the garden and we had all kinds of, my husband had all kinds of fruits and all kinds of vegetables and all kinds of plants that he used to plant by the thousands. He went out and planted thousands and thousands. And we had all these beautiful people there. Unbelievable.

Dodson: Do you remember what the present site of Valley College was like, the area of Fulton and Burbank?

Maria: Was there a truck farm?

Dodson: There was a dairy there, wasn't there?

Maria: Wasn't there a truck farm where they used to plant all kinds of vegetables? They used to have alot of vegetables.

Kathy: Did you know the owner of the dairy farm there, a Mr. Chaulky?

Francisco: No, I didn't know Mr. Chaulky. All I know is that I had a couple of friends that were brothers. They had about probably five acres of land facing Ethel. Well it was between Burbank and Oxnard. There were on the East side of Ethel and they used to plant you know a garden like carrots, lettuce, vegetables, so forth and so on. But I don't know about the college.

Dodson: We had originally planned to build the college in a very different location. In the area around Woodman and Magnolia in that area, which would have been a little further South. But the reason that we changed was that there was some rather expensive houses there that we didn't buy up and instead we took this area where the old dairy had been located. You remember what sort of houses were around that place?

Francisco: Not uh. It was not very nice homes. It was more farms with 10, 20 acres apiece.

Dodson: Would you say, then that coming in of the college improved that part of the valley?

Francisco: I would say so. Oh, yea there is no question about it. It really did.

Dodson: Kathy, do you have any more questions?

Kathy: Not right now.

Francisco: I want to add a little more now that my wife wrote the entrance of the Lankershim Ranch. Like I said before, the first entrances were on uh, let's say close to Lankershim and Ventura Blvd., one. The other one was close to the corner of uh, Ventura and Vineland. Then for some they sold a couple of lots or so on each entrance. So we shut off the one entrance the one on Vineland. We didn't used it, we just used the one on Lankershim Blvd. Then later on, they sold another piece of property on Lankershim Blvd., so then we had to cut the drive on kind of an angle to facing Ventura Blvd. That's when we landed in No. Hollywood. 10648 Ventura, No. Hollywood And in 1944, they sold 10 acres facing Ventura Blvd. and fruitlands. And then I had to move my mailbox over on Lankerhsim Blvd. and we landed in Hollywood on 3701 Lankershim Blvd., Hollywood 28. When they sub-divided 10 acres, then they brought in Vineland all the way through below the ranch and ended on Lankershim Blvd. Then I had to move my mailbox & my driveway on Vineland. And what was the address.

Maria: 3727 Vineland

Francisco: Landed on 3727 Vineland.

Maria: No. Hollywood.

Francisco: And we went back to No. Hollywood. And that was the end that was the last time that I had to move my mailbox and move my driveway, in otherwords, I moved one, two, three time, we moved the driveway.

And I had some experience, I remember about 1942, we had a water meter down on Fruitland. And you can imagine, we had a 4" water pipe that ran from the water meter up to the ranch. And for some reason somebody bought a lot where the water meter was and I happened to notice that when they were setting up the forms for the house, so I went and talked to Mr. Meyers, he was the one that bought it, I said, Mr. Meyers, what happened? He said we bought this lot, I am going to build a house for my daughter. I said well, but my water line runs right in the middle of this lot. He said I can't help you. So, I asked him in a nice way if he could give me 30 days so I could have my water meter moved. And he did, so I had to move my water meter over on Lankershim Blvd., we had pipeland about 600 ft long to get the water to the Lankershim Ranch. And my gas meter was in a vacant facing Lankershim Blvd. so I told Mr. Lankershim, might ought to move the gas meter too, because one of the days attorneys is going to sell that lot and you are going to be in tight spot again. I says Frank move it. So I had this gas meter moved close to the water meter right next, you know on Lankershim Blvd. and my two lines run all the way from Lankershim Blvd. to the house it was about 600 ft. It was things like that that I had to do and of course I could go ahead and do it, you know I didn't have to ask any of the Lankershim's because I had the power to do it. But I wanted to ask them just the same, I didn't want to go ahead and do it on my own, I just had to get the o.k. but like they told me alot of

Francisco: (cont) times, the place is yours to run and whatev3r you do, why it's all right with us. There's no question about it. I remember one time, before Jack moved to Newport Beach, he moved because Jacklyn, his niece, told him one day, she says, Uncle, when I get married, I'm gonna move to the ranch and kick you out! So, he said well when you get old enough, I will probably move and let you move in. So, he started moving let's say about 1936, 37 little by little. In 1938, he just about moved everything, then Jacklyn got married, and moved into the ranch. I want to tell you the kind of people they were, the Lankershim's with us. My wife, you know when she heard that Jacklyn was moving, her husband and the little girl to the ranch next door to us, why she says, Frank, I don't know how I'm going to get along with her, we got along fine with Jack I don't know about her, she's young and she's got different ideas and I want to go home to our own home in No. Hollywood. Well, let's wait, Maria, she might be all right. She looks to me like she's a nice kid. So, Lankershim and Jacklyn used to come over, you know and start lookin the place over because they want to decorate her side. They wanted to decorate our side, but I told them, no, I do my own decorating. You do yours, so they had some decorating people come over and do the house for Jacklyn. Before Jacklyn moved, Maria wanted to come home just the same, but just before Jacklyn moved, Miss Lankershim Jacklyn came over one day and Miss Lankershim called me and said Frank, I want to talk to you, I want to talk to Maria, in front of Jacklyn. So we got together and then she told Jacklyn, "Jackie, so you are going to move next door to Frank and Mary, but you can do anything you want inside the front door and the back door, you haven't got a thing to say outside the grounds, outside of your house. If you want any fruits, if you want any flowers, you ask Frank, he's the boss. They have more right, Frank and Maria that you have, even though you are my daughter. Because they have living here for 18 years or so and they have more right. So, and don't forget, Frank, what I'm telling Jacklyn, that she isn't supposed to do a thing outside of her front and back door. She can do anything she wants inside of that, but outside of that you are the boss. That's the way it goes.

Dodson: Jacklyn was the adopted child, wasn't she?

Francisco: Yes, she was.

Dodson: And she was married and did have some children of her own?

Francisco: She had one, at that time. She had one, by the name of uh..

Maria: One daughter.

Francisco: One daughter. Stephanie.

Dodson: Was Stephanie then, uh, went back to France, or Jacklyn went back and Stephanie was raised in France?

Francisco: She's still there.

Dodson: I see, so in that sense of the word there would be Lanker--shims in France or descendents of Lankershims., although she is adopted.

Francisco: Yes.

Dodson: I see, then they would have inherited the Lankershim Estate, I suppose, is that right?

Francisco: Well, I wouldn't say that she is going to inherit the whole thing. All I know is that she is getting so much a month. And when she's gone, I think that would be the end. When Jacklyn is gone. Probably the fortune will go someplace else.

Dodson: I see, it wouldn't go to her daughter?

Francisco: No. But she might get a very little amount. A very little amount as far as I know.

Dodson: Mr. Avila, then can you tell us exactly what your duties with the Lankershim family were and how the estate was organized when you made a connection with it?

Francisco: Well, I was hired by Jack Lankershim, himself, on June the 15th of 1929, but I didn't go to work until Monday, the 18th of June, of 1929.
The first that I did when I was hired, was to help remove fence along Laurel Cyn. about a mile of barbed wire fence and post and we reset about a half mile on Eureka and the end of Eureka all the way up to Berry Dr.

Dodson: What was the purpose of removal?

Francisco: They sold that big acreage of land for subdivision, then about 1942, they sold another partial. And I had to move the same fence that I just said, tore the ranch about a half a mile. And about the same year, I removed about 500 ft of fence on Lankershim Blvd. 150 ft toward the ranch. Then in 1946, I removed about a half a mile of chain link fence, 6 ft high, part on Fruitland, and part on Ventura Blvd and part on the driveway. Because when the sold 10 acres facing Ventura and Fruitland. And from then on, I around the ranch, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX just would say if I needed any help, you know, doing the walnuts was the only thing I used to keep to sell, because there was quite a bid on it. But you take all the rest of the fruit, why that used to stay on the trees for the birds and for the peoples that would ask for it.

Dodson: Now did the whole income of the ranch come from the walnuts then?

Francisco: It was about the only thing, but I say the income of the walnuts probably run about 150 dollars at that time, pr year. It was low income at that place. The income that I know since I went to work for XXXXXXXXXXXXXXalmost no income.

Dodson: Wasn't that a rather odd situation, that they had the XX ranch, but they got really no income out of it?

Francisco: It was no income at all, because the only thing that sold was the walnuts, if we had a good crop, and if we had a bad crop we just forgot about it, we just left it for the squirrels. It's true. Apricots, we had so much apricots that they were about six inches deep from the ground. We never bothered to pick them or the plums.

Dodson: Well, did the Lankershim's make no real use of the ranch since there was no income from it?

Francisco: None at all, from 1929, when I went to work there, there was no income, that I know of.

Dodson: And it was used just for pleasure then?

Francisco: Just for pleasure. And Jack sometimes would go for 6 months or for a year and we'd be the only ones at home.

Kathy: Do you know how he aquired his fortune?

Francisco: Real Estate.

Kathy: Where?

Francisco: Here in the valley.

Kathy: But how did he get the money to buy that?

Francisco: Well, I understand from what Jack used to tell me once in awhile, you know that we got together and he's talking about the old times. See, Isaac Lankershim, his grandfather he used to have cattle drives and probably that is why, how he acquired his fortune he used to come to the valley and buy this 60,000.

Kathy: When he came over from Bavaria, did he make 115,000 here, or did he come with it?

Francisco: I would say that he made it here.

Maria: He made it in San Francisco, wasn't it? He came from San Francisco.

Dodson: That was my impression, that he came from Northern California here that he went first up there.

Maria: I guess, he first came from Bavaria, he settled in Missouri, because that's where the children were born. There he used to have cattle drives. I understand he was living in San Francisco. And he used come from San Francisco all over to Fresno and up to San Diego, he used to travel all this, he really was a really good worker and he really knew what he was doing and in event we got some of the utinsels, not some of the utinsels, but anything made with leather. Frank's got them there in the garage. What do they call those things they use in mending sewing leather, there's some of the needles, there's some of the threads, some of the rivets. And some of the things, the uh um

Francisco: There are some of those sharp instruments...

Maria: Pierced

Francisco: Leather

Dodson: Do they call that an awl

Maria: I think that's what they call that an awl .

Francisco: I have one in the garage

Maria: We have one the garage, there. We got that from him, We have two different things, one is a spoon, that used to belong to Mrs. Isaac Lankershim and Mrs. Lankershim gave it to me for my birthday and then I have a um silver container, it's a little pitcher and she used that to put in her needles, uh they used to put the cushion there and they used to put the needles in it. It has her initials on that. And we have two or three things that really belong to them especially. And of course of the stuff that we have has belong to all the family, at the ranch. We had many things, all the things that we have belonged to the Lankershim family and my husband's got the letter listing the things that were given to him by the adopted daughter, we have the letter.

Francisco: We have the letter.

Maria: When it was given to us, we did not realize at that time what that was. To us, it was just something that belonged to our family and was just given to us so we are going to use them. They are not things that we would destroy, some we gave away, some we sold. And so we did all those things without knowing it, the value they would be for the generations to come because, see I guess in some way he was the caretaker of the things that belonged to them, this is the way I look at it.

Dodson: When did Jacklyn leave this valley and go back to France?

Maria: Jacklyn moved to Beverly Hills in 40....

Francisco: 46.

Maria: In 46. And about in 1953, she left for France and she's been there, I think she comes back once in awhile, but we don't see her anymore like we used to before. She used to come and stay with us.

Dodson: I see, you haven't seen her then since she left Beverly Hills?

Maria: When was it?

Francisco: The last time was in 53. She came over and stayed with us overnight.

Maria: In North Hollywood.

Francisco: In North Hollywood, in our own home in North Hollywood. She was like one of the family, you know and in other words, she was like my daughter. She was very nice to get along and very likeable.

Maria: But uh, she was left so much money and all the things that were left to her in France.

Evening of February 25, 1976, interview conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson, curator of Los Angeles Valley College Historical Museum and Miss Kathryn Berstmeister museum aide.

Mr. Avila was the ranch foreman for the Lankershim family. He knew intimately, several generations of the family was highly trusted by them, was on very friendly terms with them. He was in a position, then to give an insight into the Lankershim family which few other people could have given.

Dodson: I might add, too, that Mr. and Mrs. Avila and their daughter Esther have been especially good friends of our Historical Museum at College. Mr. and Mrs. Avila and Esther have contributed money to the museum, they have promised us artifacts of the Lankershim family and they have even made the somewhat humorous contribution of a parking meter which they hoped will induce visitors to the museum to part with some of their nickels and dimes.
We are very deeply grateful to this generous family for the many benefactions they have heaped on our museum.